

presentation of modern plays. Having so much width and so little depth, it seems made for silhouettes and patterns rather than grouping" (Unattributed clipping, Dec. 19, 1924. MTPL). The name of the Greek Theatre and the classical facade caused the building to become popularly known as the Greek Temple. On the lintel were carved the words TO KALOKATAION, ~~literally "sound mind, sound body"~~ but soon to be freely translated into the School's motto, "We Strive for the Good and the Beautiful." One enthusiastic newspaper account of the opening judged the School "the most beautiful public building in the city of Toronto," and its cultural contribution was expected to be great. "The word 'elocution' has fallen into disrepute, " the writer noted

and has become associated with cheap display and superficial study. The mushroom schools of oratory, which seemed to spring up by the scores in the United States years ago, brought disrepute on the elocutionist and provoked a smile by their idle pretensions.

Emma Scott Raff's approach would rehabilitate this art, while the introduction of dramatic training was also viewed as progressive: "The old prejudice against the drama is fast disappearing, as the formerly Puritan Canadian comes to see the possibilities of the art" (Unattributed clipping [1907] E- F 2209-162-0-694).¹²

In 1908-09, the first full year of the Margaret Eaton School, the curriculum had taken on the contours it would hold for seventeen years. Emma Scott Raff is listed as teaching the art of expression, assisted by Gertrude Philp (a graduate of the earlier School of Expression) for voice culture, reading and interpretation, and by N. Topley Thomas (an alumna of the Boston School) for "Theory of Expression" and "Dramatic Thinking." Charlotte Ross undertook French and English rhetoric, literature, and composition; while the versatile Florence Withrow, B.A., taught a wide variety of historical and mythological topics.¹³ There were also instructors in French, German and Physical Education.

An overview of the curriculum from Musical Canada in 1909-- by a woman who taught in the School in its first year-- helps to show ~~how~~ the arrangement of these curricular elements. "Three complete courses are offered," noted E.C. Fleming:

1. The Professional Course, which demands matriculation at entrance and covers the whole outline of study, including twenty-five lectures per week and personal tuition in Voice Culture. This course cannot be lightly entered upon nor continued and is of a severe enough character to eliminate the unfit.
 2. The General Culture course, arranged for those interested in elocution and platform work as an art, embraces the University English topics, Voice Culture and Physical Culture, Deportment, Recitation and Criticism classes.
 3. The Special Course, arranged for students who want the University English topics with Voice Culture, Deportment and Recitation with Criticism.
- (Fleming 240)

Since the curricular offerings were arranged to allow as much flexibility as possible to students, the students themselves were correspondingly varied. The recent graduate "can find incentives in the classes to continue her study of literature, or to carry her modern language study past the point of school drudgery to practical usefulness and literary pleasure." Equally, the "woman for whom the opportunities of culture have been reserved for the mature years of life can find the help and stimulus she needs in one or other of the classes in literature, languages or history." Even the "backward or defective girl can find sympathetic individual instruction that other schools have not arranged for in their programmes." The writer notes the existence of training programmes for theological students and public speakers, and evening classes for business men

and women in "English literature, French, German, Physical Culture, Voice Culture, Interpretation, Oratory and Dramatic Art" (241). Thus the school was dedicated to education in a variety of guises: full or part time, advanced or remedial, for professional training or personal pleasure.

However, while students could choose among offerings, there was a strong degree of curricular integration, as demanded by Emma Scott Raff's goal to provide a "threefold Education for Women" whose goals she succinctly stated: "We believe that head, hand and heart should be trained at the same time, and so are working for mental, moral, and physical strength" (Raff 251). The part-time or occasional student in drama, for example, would find that subject taught in relation to literary interpretation; while the literary student was made aware of dramatic stagings and voice expression. The full-time student, no matter her eventual goal -- performance, teaching, "Y" and settlement work, or household management-- would receive training in all areas of literary, physical, and dramatic instruction; further, each of these subject areas was placed in active relationship to the others, as is made apparent by the Calendar's description of the Dramatic Arts programme:

In the department of acting we aim to give such training that the physical, mental and moral needs of the pupils be equally supplied. We train students to do their own thinking. The work begins with exercises in deep breathing -- the development of quality and quantity, articulation and pronunciation.

The COURSE IN LITERATURE is on the origin and development of the drama, analytical lectures with illustrations, readings and rehearsals of classics and modern authors.

PHYSICAL TRAINING has for its ultimate object the highest standard of physical excellence and to produce the suppleness in action and grace in

response that distinguish the artist from the novice.

MAKE-UP. The costuming of a character in harmony with period and time. The preparation of face and head to represent the individual of the dramatis personae are [sic] very powerful factors, so we include this art in this department of our work. (Calendar 1908-1909 17)

Dramatic arts students in 1908 would study Yeats' Shadowy Waters and Cathleen Ni Houlihan; Lady Gregory's Hyacinth Halvey and Lady Gregory and Douglas Hyde's The Poor House; as well as Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer and Netta Syrett's Fairy Plays.¹⁴ (The latter are presumably included since a number of students were training to work with children.) The Shakespeare to be studied included Twelfth Night, As You Like It, A Winter's Tale and Midsummer Night's Dream, although students would encounter tragedies and history plays -- Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Henry IV (I and II), Hamlet and Lear -- in the literature classes of the first and second years. Over the years, the dramatic arts curriculum, in parallel with the "University English Topics" would concentrate^{on} classical, medieval, Shakespearean and modern drama, and attempt to impart to students a sound historical sense of the evolution of the drama. Students also had the advantage of a Shakespeare study group and another devoted to interpretive reading of the classics, as well as a roster of open evening lectures, often given by professors from the university. In addition, over the years many theatrical luminaries lectured to the students and the public; as a member of the drama committee of the Heliconian Club, Emma Scott Raff was responsible for hosting performers and playwrights visiting the city, and she was able to use these contacts and her considerable powers of persuasion to bring important figures to the School.

The progress of one full-time pupil provides a student's-eye view of the Margaret Eaton School. Dora Mavor had to that point attended eighteen schools

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and held the distinction of twice failing a first university year. Clearly, her interests lay elsewhere -- stirred, in particular, by the open-air Shakespearean productions of the touring Ben Greet company, in which she took a minor part (Unattributed clipping H- MU8092 file 10)-- and she can scarcely be blamed for her choice. A series of school copybooks remain as a reminder of how cramped women's education could be, with their dutiful notes on hygiene and Belgium history, their perspective sketches of windmills, their copying of dates and inane definitions: ("Generalement, il faut que les acteurs soient grands et importants.")(DMM box 1). Her father James Mavor, the eminent Toronto professor, knew Emma Scott Raff through university connections, and had asked her to organize the dramatic component of the 1907 commencement festivities (Unattributed clipping [1907] E- F 229-162-0-694) and Dora Mavor herself would have met Scott Raff by 1908 at the latest, while acting Rosalind in the U.C. Women's Dramatic Club production of As You Like It staged at the Greek Theatre (Programme DMM box 1A). It can be imagined with what enthusiasm Dora Mavor entered the school in 1909, to find a curriculum fully designed for her interests and the opportunities for substantial practical training. She starred in the production of Iphigeneia which composed part of an "Interpretive Recital" in December of 1910; and some time in the season appeared in a mixed-cast performance of Obstinacy ("adapted from the German by Anne Peacock") (Unattributed clipping DMM box 1A). The end of that school year shows Mavor caught up in a whirlwind of activity. While she did not take part in the Associate Players' trio of "Irish Plays" in April or the school's production of Comedy of Errors the next month, within the space of a few weeks she assisted backstage in a programme of "Elizabethan Revels" (prefaced with a lecture by Scott Raff on folklore), appeared as Helena in the school's production of Midsummer Night's Dream (staged at the Royal Alexandra Theatre) and, most

consequently, took the part of Kate Hardcastle in the Associate Players' She Stoops to Conquer. A diplomatic note from Scott Raff to James Mavor speaks volumes. A special seat has been reserved for him: "Will you kindly aid us by your criticism of our play. . . .Will you kindly feel free to wander about the theatre and so tell us if the scenes carry well" (April 11, 1911. DMM box 1A). He was finally convinced that his daughter was destined for a theatrical career, an enthusiasm shared by Hector Charlesworth, who judged the play at the Earl Grey competition held in Winnipeg that year.

The commencement of 1911 was a three-part extravaganza showcasing the talents of the students -- readings and scenes from Shakespeare, Browning, Wordsworth, Zona Gale, and Netta Syrett; exercises and drills by the students in physical education; stagings of The Comedy of Errors and Syrett's In Arcady. Dora Mavor read Rossetti's "The King's Tragedy" and was awarded both the E.R. Wood Scholarship and the Gerhard Heintzman Prize for Shakespeare Interpretation (Jackson 18). It appears that she remained for a third "professional" training year, for she repeated her triumph at the next convocation, performing a monologue from Romeo and Juliet and gaining the Harry McGee scholarship for interpretation. During her years at the school, Dora Mavor also performed with other theatrical groups; her experiences are indicative of the intrication of the Margaret Eaton School with the amateur theatre scene of its day. She remained involved with the women of University College, playing Olivia in their 1909 production of Twelfth Night; in 1910 she appeared in Catharine Nina Merritt's A Little Leaven, staged by a company the playwright formed for that year's Earl Grey competitions (Sperdakos 47); and the next year she performed in the Arts and Letters Club's second production of Maeterlinck's Interiors.¹⁵ Winning a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, she became the first Canadian at that institution (Gardner 5). Apparently the Margaret Eaton School training

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compared favourably to R.A.D.A., for Dora Mavor remarked to Scott Raff when the latter visited her in London that "[o]urs is a bigger school, the work here is all mimetic" (ESR report, rec'd Nov. 15, 1912: E- 22-6-1). In affectionate letters Emma Scott Raff continued to provide Dora Mavor with ~~wise~~ practical counselling and continual exhortations to look to the state of her soul, during the difficult early years of the latter's stage apprenticeship; in turn, Dora Mavor felt a continuing allegiance to her mentor and to the School (Correspondence ESR to DMM, DMM box 60). After a stint with the Ben Greet players and theatrical work in Ottawa and the United States, she returned to the School in 1921 as an instructor to find it much expanded. An annex for physical education had opened on Yonge Street in 1918, while in 1919 the School had taken over the expression and dramatic department of the Toronto Conservatory of Music. A residence for the full-time students opened in 1920 on Dundonald Street, and the part-time and extension programme had experienced considerable expansion of both course scope and student enrolment.

The years spanning Dora Mavor's student days and her later time as a teacher and director show a wide range of material performed by the School. The reasons for choices were often pragmatic. Scripts needed to be suitable for young women and sometimes children; and plays were often chosen for specific occasions (a garden fête or Christmas pageant, year-end recital or war-time fundraiser). Participation was also crucial; contemporary photographs suggest that Shakespearean comedies were frequently-staged in part because they required a large cast and could accommodate children from the Saturday classes. The painstaking and sometimes painful account books of the School show that financial considerations were always present. But the selections reflect philosophical as well as practical factors. Classical and Shakespearean material has always enjoyed a particular cachet in the newly post-colonial country; and

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such staging was a continuing priority for amateur groups dissatisfied with the melodramas and comic turns of the United States touring companies. The staging of classical dramas was consonant with Emma Scott Raff's reworking of "Greek" ideals into a programme of education for women, as well as with her Delsartist orientation; it should be noted that turn-of-the-century women's classicism was less a Victorian hold-over than an emancipatory (and thus modernizing) reworking of older forms.¹⁶ Her concern with delivery dictated other choices, and (as Robert Scott notes) "much of her work in the theatre was devoted to the production of poetic drama which would give full scope to the voice" (1966: 41). Finally, Emma Scott Raff's commitment to the literary modern extended to both study and staging. While classical and Shakespearean drama, miracle and mystery plays and revels, children's drama and selections from Irish playwrights formed the backbone of the School's programmes, the curriculum and the Reading Club for Contemporary Authors provided a wide exposure to contemporary drama, and this material was frequently staged. Such a mixed repertoire was typical of the time and in fact little different from the "experimental" theatre to follow. (Hart House veteran Raymond Card recalled a first season under Roy Mitchell, composed of Merrill Denison's comic Brothers-at-Arms, Dunsany's The Queen's Enemies, and Shaw's You Never Can Tell, along with The Alchemist, Chester Mysteries, Cymbeline, The Trojan Women, and Rostands' The Romancers "staged in a Watteau-like setting of tender beauty" (Card 69-70). When Hart House came under the directorship of Bertram Forsyth, Dunsany, Shaw and Shakespeare reappeared, along with Ibsen, Chesterton, Irish plays, popular and light selections, and new Canadian works (Card 70-71).) While the Margaret Eaton School appears to have staged only a few works by Canadians, it consistently performed the work of women playwrights. Later, Montreal Repertory member Lorna Sheard praised the versatile training of the school, not only in the drama

but in dance, pantomime, and voice production (Biography typescript Lorna McLean Sheard H- MU 8092).

The activities of the Associate Players of the Margaret Eaton School are better documented than the those of the School itself, for the Associate Players was a mixed troupe, with a higher profile occasioned by its participation in the Earl Grey Competitions and a coherent public identity as a mechanism for popularizing Irish drama. Its origins are in the 1907 Dramatic Club of the Margaret Eaton School -- a first version of the Players -- whose scenes from the ever-popular She Stoops to Conquer qualified it for the first Earl Grey competition. Little is known of this staging, for the group withdrew at the last minute -- presumably from respect for their benefactor Timothy Eaton, whose death sent Margaret Eaton hurrying back to Toronto from the festival (Eaton 82). The Players were absent from the next two competitions, but 1908-09 shows them sharing the interest of the University Women's Drama Club by commencing the Irish productions that would become their stock-in-trade.¹⁷ A 1909 slate, for example, consists of Yeats's Cathleen Ni Houlihan and A Pot of Broth, along with Lady Gregory's Hyacinth Holvey; while another evening in the 1909-10 season substitutes Lady Gregory's The Rising of the Moon for the second Yeats play (Scott, 112-13). In 1910 a double-bill of Cathleen Ni Houlihan and Land of Heart's Desire gained a second prize in the Earl Grey Competition; and while the Players were criticized for approaching their task in "too elocutionary a fashion," they were praised for successfully realizing the "atmosphere" of the piece and Basil Morgan was commended as the best male actor (Earl Grey 125-26). Its 1911 production of She Stoops to Conquer, while criticized for weaknesses in individual performances, won praise not only for Dora Mavor's performance but for the troupe's choice of material and Emma Scott Raff's condensation (Earl Grey 162-63). In its earliest years, the Players would concentrate on Irish material,

adding such works as Spreading the News and Mrs. Casey's Telephone; later their offerings became more diversified. In the 1914 season, for example, there were performances of A Bachelor's Romance and David Belasco's The Return of Peter Grimm. A play by Scott Raff titled The Message was performed by the group at an end-of-year gala at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in 1920. "In this little play, which is exquisite in theme and handling," wrote one journalist "the author 'puts to shame' the popular Ouija Board, and shows how man may rely upon his own innate spiritual faculties for real spiritual revelations" ("Canadian Women" 2).

H While her other duties and interests prevented Emma Scott Raff from remaining closely involved with the Players, their affiliation with the School persisted, and complementary principles may be detected. Like other amateur groups of the time, their mission was to supplement the offerings of the professional theatre: "amateurs establish a raison d'être [sic] for their existence," wrote Saturday Night of the Associate Players "when they produce plays of a definite literary quality which are unlikely to get a hearing in the professional theatre under existing commercial conditions" (Saturday Night April 9, 1910; 10). Most significantly, the Irish plays ^{were} ~~are~~ of interest because of their function as exempla of a national theatre. A concern with voice and expression explains the choice of poetic dramas; but this material also offered an opportunity to experiment with new techniques and staging seen in Abbey Theatre productions. As Robert Scott writes of the director: "On the one hand, she reacted against the tide of realism which concentrated on mise en scène and construction rather than on dialogue; on the other, she sought the more idealistic goal of restoring the art of precise, articulate delivery on the stage" (1966: 39). In this respect the dramatic presentations of the Players are characteristic of the artistic and literary production of the transition years, marked by an admixture of the iconoclastic and the traditional.



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